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City Difference Maker

Tips to help you effectively manage and lead your employees

New Exit Interview Process

Exit interviews, or exit “surveys”, have occurred rather inconsistently throughout the city in the past when employees have resigned. Exit interviews have been conducted by an array of individuals including the supervisor, the department director, the city manager or Human Resources. Documentation is hit or miss and there has been no overall tracking of what has been discovered.

It is common practice in private business and other governmental entities that these sensitive interviews be consistently conducted by a “neutral” party such as Human Resources. This was discussed at this week’s director’s meeting.

Moving forward, HR will schedule and conduct exit interviews with **all** regular employees giving notice that they will be leaving employment of the city. We have created tools to track, analyze and report information gathered from these discussions.

The city’s goal of retaining talented employees can be impacted through completing these interviews. Employee exit interviews provide us the opportunity to learn how the city can improve itself; ensure employees leaving feel good about their service; and could encourage the employee to stay under new circumstances if appropriate.

The Interview

The terminating employee will be assured that they will not be harmed or retaliated against for the information they provide. We will explain the reasons for doing the interview as an opportunity to gather information to improve how we do things at the city. The employee will not receive the same promise of strict confidentiality as had been done in the past. Information gathered should be, and will be, forwarded on to department directors for review.

The Process

HR will contact employees, upon receipt of their “notice,” to schedule an exit interview. Interviews will be scheduled at the same time that the employee meets with the HR/Benefits Specialist (Morgan) to go over benefits. Be aware, this will add to the time they would have normally been out of the office for this

meeting. Please help us to remind staff that the interview is part of the termination process—we do not want to have it perceived as optional. For the data to be valid, we need to meet with all exiting permanent employees (unless they are terminated or abruptly resign).

HR will track data gathered from interviews and will periodically send information out to managers. An electronic copy of all exit interviews, with comments and notes, will be sent out to department directors who should then forward to their managers. Exit interviews will be sent to directors after the final day of employment—we will not send them out while the employee is still working for the city. However, if information arises that the director or supervisor should be aware of ahead of time, we may notify them earlier.

This new process should not discourage you from conducting your own exit interviews. It is appropriate for a manager to schedule an informal meeting with their employee to gather information. It is also appropriate for a superintendent or director, to schedule interviews with staff to understand why people leave their departments. The recommendation is that you make your interview less formal with less note taking as HR will be collecting the “data.” Give yourself the opportunity to gain rapport and understand the real underlying reasons that your staff move on.

Summary

The ultimate reasons for the change in policy are to gather complete data by interviewing all staff and to make sense of the information gathered. HR will ensure the consistency of interviews and will report findings that may help us to retain our talented workforce. We appreciate your willingness to allow staff to attend these meetings as we get in touch with them.

The [new exit interview questionnaire](#) is posted on the intranet for your reference (Recruitment/bottom of 1st column). Please contact James in the HR Office if you have questions.